

March 3, 2021

ANNOUNCEMENT

Borough Manager Keller explained the format for this evening's meeting, advising that the meeting is a GoTo Meeting and available on-line. Public comments are being accepted through email and chat prior to 7:00 p.m. and will be announced to all. Comments are limited to 300 words to be in compliance with Council's three-minute rule and participants shall be identified accordingly.

CONDITIONAL USE HEARING, Dr. Candis Fields-Johnson, 206 North Charlotte Street

Solicitor Garner opened the Conditional Use hearing at 6:30 p.m. and presented several Council exhibits into evidence.

Dr. Fields-Johnson was sworn in and provided a power point presentation outlining her proposal for the Brilliant Beginnings Day Care Facility. She testified that the children's ages would range from infant to four years, the hours would be 6:00 a.m. -7:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday and there would be a maximum of 12 children in the available four rooms. Dr. Fields-Johnson added that a traffic-impact study was performed and noted that the children would bring their own lunches.

Solicitor Garner and the Councilors commended Dr. Fields-Johnson on her presentation. There was no public comment and the hearing closed at 6:58 p.m.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

The March 3, 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by President Weand.

ATTENDANCE

Councilors present were Ryan Procsal, Lisa Vanni, Donald Lebedynsky, Trenita Lindsay, Dan Weand, and Joseph Kirkland (arrived 7:15 p.m.). Also present were Borough Manager Justin Keller, Mayor Stephanie Henrick, Solicitor Charles Garner and Borough Secretary Virginia Takach. Councilor Paules was absent.

INVOCATION

President Weand requested a moment of silence.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENTATION – AL'S HEART TEMPORARY WARMING CENTER UPDATE

Tom Niarhos Director of LIFT, provided an update on the Al's Heart Warming Center that opened in November 2020. He noted that the Center has been at full capacity of 27 guests since January 19, 2021. He added that the Center attempts to verify recent addresses in order to target

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Pottstown individuals. Mr. Niaros recognized the assistance and support of the Ricketts Center, NAACP and the local Police Department. He also noted that the Pottstown Hospital has provided linens and is offering to launder them weekly and explained the daily cleaning and sanitizing services. Mr. Niarhos announced a fund-raising banquet scheduled for March 27th at Sunnybrook.

Karla Romberg, TCN Services, added that it is beneficial if the Center is able to locate local residents and to become familiar with Pottstown families.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Infrastructure – Councilor Lebedynsky noted that a report was in the packets.
- b. Transportation – There was no meeting.
- c. Ordinance Review Committee – There was no meeting.
- d. Efficient Methods – Mr. Keller provided an update on the Human Resources management software. Additional initiatives will be presented to Council in the near future. This will be a self-based training from 4 hours – 100 hours of training.

BOARDS & COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Emergency Services Report – Chief Hand provided the statistics for the month of February with 99 fire calls and 311 EMS calls.
- b. Human Relations Commission – A report was in the packets.
- c. Land Bank – There was no report.
- d. Library – Board President Frances Hylton reported that participation in the Library has dropped but appointments and curbside pick-ups are available. She also provided information on upcoming children and adult events. Ms. Hylton announced a trivia event scheduled for March 9th and the 2nd annual Chairity event for auctioning off chairs.
- d. Ricketts Community Center – A report was in the packets.
- e. Pottstown School District – Councilor Lindsay reported that new items are listed on the School’s Facebook page. Several alumni members are featured on this page. She advised that February events included Black Lives Matter events and the School is hiring for several positions.

MAYOR’S REPORT

Mayor Henrick highlighted several meetings and events in which participated. She also referred to Jenna Armato’s website and the Fair Funding events. Mayor Henrick also referred to Hobart’s Run trash bin event, Charter schools and the Edgewood clean up, mosaic gardens, YMCA website pages.

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MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Keller updated Council on PennDOT installation and work on the King Street Bridge project, along with PECO gas line replacement on High Street. He added that Staff did an excellent job with snow removal . Mr. Keller also announced that Councilor Lindsay will serve on the Montgomery County Planning Commission's Environment Advisory Committee.

Mr. Keller also reported that with the repaving on High Street, PennDOT has recommended a road diet with bike lanes from Manatawny to the Borough line. PennDOT will also be meeting with West Pottsgrove Township. He added that PennDOT would design and install and the Borough would be responsible for line and signage maintenance.

It was the consensus of Council to allow Mr. Keller to proceed and correspond with PennDOT on this project.

Mr. Keller also advised that he met with Bureau of Aviation representatives to determine the value and impact of the Airport and will provide further information when received. He also reported that Finance Director applications are under review.

ANIMAL ORDINANCE DISCUSSION

Katie Scanlan, Pottstown Resident and EAC member, was present and provided an outline of the benefits of allowing chickens in the Borough. She referred to a recent petition in asking Council to review the Animal Ordinance with 225 responses in favor of a change. Ms. Scanlan also provided statistics in the amount of eggs produced and the benefits of having chickens. She noted that she is not recommending allowing roosters due to excessive noise. She suggested required space limitations, permits, participants being required to attend a class and possible a neighborhood consent.

Mr. Keller reviewed the recent process, noting that this has been reviewed and discussed with the Ordinance Review Committee.

Councilor Kirkland provided comments on his experience with chickens and noted that he would not oppose residents having chickens with the recommended procedures.

Councilor Vanni commended having this matter brought to the public and suggested a trial program.

Councilor Lindsay expressed a concern regarding the smell and noise of having chickens, as she receives numerous complaints regarding dogs on these matters.

Mr. Keller referred to the recent and lengthy complaints regarding the dogs on Johnson Street.

President Weand reminded all that the residents with chickens are in violation of the Borough's ordinance, which causes a strain on present staff and resources.

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Councilors Procsal commented that after the cost of a permit and construction of a tent, it doesn't compare to \$1.99 price of a dozen eggs and these violations are not well received by Staff.

Mr. Keller noted that when L & I Staff is not available, the calls go the Police Department to address and cited the number of calls from the Departments in the last several years.

Councilor Lebedynsky commented that the ACO deals with dogs and cats left at rental properties when tenants leave or get evicted. He added that if they leave dogs, they will leave chickens.

ACO, Jon Daywalt, commented on the City of Reading withdrawing its allowance of chickens due to the numerous complaints regarding the smell, foxes and rabid animals. He added that Tractor Supply advises clients to check borough and township ordinances when buying fencing for chickens.

Keith Place advised that there are numerous undocumented calls through the L & I Department and outlined the costs involved.

President Weand advised that this matter will be listed for Monday's agenda.

TTN BUSINESS OVERLAY ZONING

Mr. Keller explained the proposal to allow an overlay of mixed commercial and retail uses, with the concept of incorporating residential and light manufacturing and retail commercial uses in the Traditional Town Neighborhood.

It was the consensus to authorize the Solicitor to draft an ordinance for Council's review.

AMENDMENT TO MEETING RULES OF COUNCIL

Solicitor Garner outlined the present Council Meeting Rules adopted by Council in January 2020. He also explained the proposal to extend the time limit for Citizen's comments from three minutes to five minutes if there are five or less speakers and also explained that Council has the ability in the present rules, RULE 12, to suspend the rules and allow additional time for a citizen to speak.

AMENDMENT TO FEE SCHEDULE

Mr. Keller noted that several fees are in need of updating, including fess under the Right to Know process and the Police Department's Cellebrite shared use.

DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS

Mr. Keller also explained the annual records destruction process, this year to include records from the Finance, Police, Administration and Parks and Recreation Departments.

President Weand noted that these resolutions will be listed for approval on Monday's agenda.

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WAIVER OF FEES POLICY AMENDMENT

President Weand explained the policy amendment for internal waivers be done in advance rather than coming before Council for each request. This includes the waiver of fees for The Memorial Day Parade.

Mr. Keller noted it would not include any request for the Federally funded areas, such as the Smith Family Plaza.

DOWNTOWN OUTDOOR DINING

President Weand explained the agreement to allow sidewalk dining and recommended this be extended for an additional six months.

BOARD VACANCIES

President Weand reviewed the upcoming Board vacancies and term expirations and noted these would be listed for consideration on Monday's agenda.

PARKS AND RECREATION – PATRIOTIC 5K, JULY 4, 2021

TIBURON 5K, OCTOBER 9, 2021

POTTSTOWN FARM, OCTOBER 30, 2021 (ALCOHOL IN THE PARK)

Mr. Keller reviewed the use and closure of several Borough streets for upcoming events. He added that the FARM is requesting to allow alcohol in Smith Family Plaza for its last FARM event.

President Weand noted that these will be listed for consideration on Monday's agenda.

ZONING – MATHEW AND BEENA VARUGHESE 910 HIGH STREET

Solicitor Garner explained the requests for variances from the applicant for additional apartments and a relief from parking requirements. He added that Councilor Paules had recommended this be sent directly to the Zoning Hearing Board.

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS PRESENT

- a. Tom Winterbottom, King Street – questioned if Al's Warming Center will be extended.

Solicitor Garner noted that this may require zoning relief, as this was a one-time special exemption.

- b. Marie Haige, Pottstown - commented that she is supporting the idea of having chickens in the Borough as it would be an educational tool for children.

- c. Cheyanne Daywalt, North Charlotte Street - questioned if the support of chickens is from Pottstown residents and not outsiders.

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d. Darlene Bainbridge, 548 Farmington Avenue – spoke in support for responsible chicken ownership. She has had more issues with dogs in her neighborhood.

e. Kelsey Schwenk, North Evans Street – commented that it would be awesome to allow chickens and farm animals in the Borough and would volunteer for a pilot program.

COUNCILORS' GENERAL DISCUSSION

Councilor Procsal again reiterated his appreciation for having a hospital within five minutes from home.

Mayor Henrick thanked Katie Scanlon for being foster child for chickens in Pottstown.

ADJOURNMENT

President Weand adjourned the meeting at 9:25 p.m.